DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 451 171 SP 039 848

AUTHOR Bruckner, Martha
TITLE Developing School Leaders through Collaboration and Mentoring: Planning for Success.
PUB DATE 2001-03-00
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (53rd, Dallas, TX, March 1-4, 20001).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; *Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduate Study; Higher Education; *Instructional Leadership; Leadership Qualities; *Mentors; Portfolios (Background Materials)
IDENTIFIERS University of Nebraska Omaha

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the importance of sharing the responsibility for developing quality school leaders. Potential and beginning administrators need a powerful support system, and mentors can be very helpful. Administrators need many practical experiences in order to develop necessary competencies and attitudes. At the University of Nebraska at Omaha, graduate students in educational administration are required to select a resource mentor (a practicing school administrator) at the beginning of each semester. Resource mentor activities are tied to national program standards for educational administration. Mentors and students sign contract-like formal agreements. Resource mentors recommend professional growth activities for students and help them select real-life projects. Students have to work with mentors on at least one course assignment. At the end of each school year, mentors and students attend a conference at which they share successes. Students and mentors completed surveys at the end of the first year and will continue in the future. Program revisions will be based on assessment data. As part of continuing program development, performance portfolios have been incorporated in which students must evaluate their administrative skills at the beginning, middle, and end of their program and collect evidence of administrative training experiences. (Contains 30 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 451 171

Developing School Leaders Through Collaboration and Mentoring: Planning for Success

Martha Bruckner, Ph. D.
Department of Educational Administration and Supervision
University of Nebraska at Omaha
6001 Dodge Street, Kayser Hall 414
Omaha, NE 68182-0162
(402) 554-3445
mbruckner@mail.unomaha.edu

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
2001 Annual Meeting, Dallas, Texas
March, 2001

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Bruckner

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP039848

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Developing School Leaders Through Collaboration and Mentoring: Planning for Success

The organizers of the 53rd annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education have chosen as the theme of their conference: "Caring, competent educators: A common goal, a shared responsibility." Much emphasis has been placed on the shared responsibility of developing caring, competent teachers. At local, state, and national levels, strategies as diverse as legislatively-directed pay increases to national certification proposals have been suggested as possible responses to an increasing need for excellent teachers. Less emphasis has been directed toward sharing the responsibility of developing the same caliber of school leaders. This paper will present information about the need for such programs and will outline one possible plan for sharing responsibility in the effort to prepare excellent school leaders.

It is essential for potential and beginning administrators to have an excellent support system as they enter the field of school leadership; mentoring can play a vital role in this system. Likewise, it is important that potential school administrators have many practical experiences as they develop the competencies and attitudes important in school administration. The concepts of having a practicing school administrator serve as a "resource mentor" to graduate students throughout their study of educational administration is a way of merging the need for practical experiences and the need for personal support. The results can be better-trained school leaders working for improved schools.

An over-used analogy depicts that it takes a village to raise a child. The concept of resource mentor suggests that it takes more than a university program to raise an effective school administrator. The cooperation of university, student, and school practitioner can combine to help develop more aware, more effective school administrators.

A university program that requires students to select mentors is a major first step in developing strategies that best prepare school leaders. In this university's program of study, graduate students in educational administration are required to select a resource mentor at the beginning of each semester of their graduate program. Mentors may continue to work with prospective administrators throughout the program, or students may request different mentors in different semesters. Throughout the course of study, one or more

resource mentor(s) is (are) utilized to provide practical, course-related activities to broaden the student's experiences and to develop the student's skills. Resource mentor activities are tied to NCATE/ELCC program standards for educational administration.

Review of Literature

Research in the late 1980's and early 1990's records calls for change in preparation programs in educational leadership. (Murphy & Hallinger, 1987; Muse, Wasden, & Thomas, 1988; Thomson, Hill & Conny, 1993; UCEA, 1987). The importance of internships, mentoring relationships, reflective practice, and student cohorts in the preparation of school leaders became more apparent (Kraus & Cordeiro, 1995, p. 5). In the late 1980's, the issue of standards for school leaders and their preparation programs began. The National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA, 1989) released a report calling for tougher standards for administrator preparation programs, including one full year of internship for interns, similar to the residency requirement for medical students. (Calibrese & Straut, 1999).

Recent evaluations of administrative preparation programs suggest the importance of at least six components in the most effective programs: sufficient time on task, placement with mentors and mentor training, multiple and alternative internship experiences, reflective seminars, field supervision, and program coordination. (Krueger & Milstein, 1995; Milstein, 1993, Milstein & Krueger, 1997). This review of literature will focus on the need for early, varied, and frequent internship experiences, the need for effective mentoring relationships in administrative preparation programs, and the benefits of providing these practices through collaboration or partnership.

Internships

Cognitive psychology theorists (e.g., Lave & Wegner, 1991; Leithwood, Steinback & Begley, 1992) and adult learning theorists (e.g. Knowles, 1987; Kolb, 1984) suggest that internship training is important. According to these theories, administrative preparation programs are enhanced by opportunities to allow the apprentice to interact with real people in solving real problems in real schools.

School leadership programs of the past have been criticized for being too theoretical in nature, and with providing too few hands-on experiences. Improving clinical experiences

is viewed as one of the most effective ways to train potential school leaders (Shen & Hsieh, 1999).

Leithwood, Jantzi, and Coffin (1995) wrote that internships provide authentic experiences and foster real-life problem-solving skills, providing hands-on learning that cannot gained by classroom study of theory and relevant information.

Milstein and Associates (1993) observed,

> The establishment of a more structured set of field experiences for future educational administrators is centrally important to the entire program redesign effort. In particular, efforts must be made to increase the quality of the experience and the time-on-task for the clinical component of the program. (p. 193)

Chance (2000, pg. 11) suggested that preparation programs can be strengthened by closely aligning course content and field experiences with expected performance standards on a regular basis. The process is strengthened even further if the practice of reflection is encouraged through portfolio presentations which include personal reflection upon professional growth over the course of the preparation program. In fact, researchers have questioned the value of internship programs without the added requirement of reflection time (Chance, 2000; Schon, 1987).

Paulter (1990) found that member institutions of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) required between 100 and 800 hours of participation, with the average being 280 hours. Institutions participating in the Danforth Principal Preparation Program required an average of 632 hours of field experiences. (Cordeiro, Krueger, Parks, Restine, & Wilton, 1993).

But, time alone is not the requirement. Aligning the internship to performance requirements may direct and strengthen the impact. Calabrese and Straut (1999) contend that "in internship programs where a theory of practice is well defined, attaining competence is a synergistic activity among the intern, university, clinical site, and the intern's immediate supervisor. High levels of competence in performance and quality outcomes characterize this type of program" (p. 403).

The literature suggests that internship programs should not be limited to the final

course or courses in a leadership training program (Krueger & Milstein, 1995; Milstein, 1993; Milstein & Krueger, 1997). Sustained and longer term internships benefit developing school leaders, as do multiple clinical experiences and even multiple mentors. Although arranging for multiple mentorships may present organizational problems, "the benefits that accrue to interns through broader perspectives of educational enterprises... are important" (Milstein & Krueger, 1997, p. 110).

Training of site supervisors is important to effective internship programs. "Most site principals have not received training in coaching, feedback, or reflectively guiding the intern. The lack of training is exacerbated by the supervising principal often being in the center of a dynamic political environment needing constant attention" (Calabrese & Straut, 1999, p. 409).

Kraus and Cordeiro (1995) found that administrators who had been provided effective internship programs indicated that the internships had provided them with authenticity to the job, had connected theory and practice, had built their confidence, had allowed them to work with an expert, had helped them understand political systems, and had provided them access to a networking system. "Administrators reported more satisfaction with their internship when their responsibilities were scaffolded by the mentor principal" (Kraus & Cordeiro, 1995, p. 20). So the connection between internship and mentoring seems a natural one.

Mentoring

The process of moving from a teaching role to a school leadership role may provide multiple surprises for the developing leader. Aspiring and entry-level school leaders need encouragement, coaching, and guidance from experienced principals (Shelton, 1991).

Barnett (1990a) identified characteristics which are most beneficial to a successful administrative mentoring program, including devoting adequate time to listen to intern's questions and concerns, displaying a caring attitude toward the intern's professional growth, providing honest and direct feedback about the intern's performance, and allowing interns to take risks by being placed in charge of meaningful projects or activities.

Playko (1995) defined four benefits that aspiring school leaders gain from the mentoring process: practical insights about the job of school administrators, increased self

confidence in their own ability to serve as a school administrator, enhanced specialization to a new professional role, and increased networking with practicing administrators after accepting a new position.

In order for mentoring to be positive and beneficial, it must be long term, perhaps even resulting in a contract for a minimum of a one-year period to demonstrate commitment to the program (Monsour, 1998).

Hackmann, Russell, and Elliott (1999) share suggestions for administrative mentors: transition the intern formally into and out of the school environment; provide quality, challenging experiences; and assume the role of a true mentor. Their suggestions for the intern are: be a "sponge"; be professional, efficient, and dependable; be proactive and assertive; and consult with the university supervisor for support or advice.

Researchers have shown that, like internship experiences, mentorship experiences can be strengthened with purposeful reflection. The mentor should act as the intern's guide during the internship and provide the opportunities for reflective practice. Having an administrative intern reflect with a practicing administrator can be a valuable experience (Daloz, 1986).

Walker and Stott (1994) indicated that there are several important issues which must be addressed when establishing a mentoring program, including mentor selection and matching of mentors and interns. The authors suggest that a strong mentoring program which concentrates on realistic issues will have benefits for both the mentors and those who are mentored.

After a review of successful university-based training programs which included a mentoring component, Muse, Thomas and Wasden (1992) discussed common problems and solutions to those programs. Some issues to be dealt with include the following:

a. some school administrators may not make good mentors
b. some mentors may misuse interns to fill personal agendas
c. some mentors may be too controlling and protective
d. some mentors may not acknowledge an intern's limitations
e. single mentors may project a limited perspective
f. dependence on mentors is a possibility

g. stereotypical gender attitudes may influence the mentoring process.

Each of the common problems can be lessened with careful planning on the part of the university and mentor.

Milstein and Krueger (1997) point out that when mentoring works most effectively, both parties gain significantly.

> Interns gain because of the focused attention, support, and guidance that is provided. Mentors gain because of the satisfaction experienced by having the opportunity to serve and give back to the field through their efforts, to explore academic learning gained by interns, and to have someone actively reflect with them about their own leadership experiences and problems. (p. 109)

Training for mentors

Mentors tend to best serve when they are given some training, whether voluntary or required, held quarterly or annually (Krueger & Milstein, 1995; Milstein, 1993; Milstein & Krueger, 1997). Training should include information about clear expectations, examples or effective activities and experiences, and a discussion of the benefits of mentoring relationships.

Collaborations / Partnerships

Carefully constructed field experiences in administrator training programs provide multiple benefits for the student, university, and school district. Interns learn practical applications of theoretical knowledge. University personnel can require students to complete experiences which relate to course concepts. School districts can benefit from the skills of eager educators and can observe them in action in real settings (Hackmann, Russel, & Elliott, 1999).

Numerous mentoring programs include official partnerships between universities and school districts. Milstein (1993) reinforced the idea that partnerships must be created to help improve preparation programs for school leadership - but he suggested that partnership is more extended than simply university - school district. He suggested that key partners include:

> chairpersons and deans in the university who make decisions about the use of time and the allocation of resources; faculty members who must modify their teaching and advisement behaviors; superintendents and other central office personnel who make decisions about district and candidate participation, as well as about release time for internships and the eventual placement of graduates; and site-based administrators who must ... arrange for classroom coverage, and act as mentors for interns (p. 187).

A study of a collaborative school district-university mentoring program at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (Chance, 2000) indicated that the program had succeeded in reaching two of Playko's (1995) benefits: providing practical insights about school administration and assisting mentees in increasing self confidence about their school leadership abilities, although no information was presented to prove that the same benefits were not available in the preparation program without the mentoring component. The author of the same study further suggested that the beneficial practice of purposeful reflection was missing in this particular mentoring program.

Muse, Thomas and Wasden (1992) found that the best mentoring programs included cooperation between school and district and university personnel in the selection, training, and evaluation of mentor principals.

Description of Resource Mentor Program, University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Fall, 1999, beginning administrative preparation students were required to name and notify a practicing school administrator who would serve as a resource mentor to the student throughout the first semester of administrative course work. Students and mentors signed a form indicating that they would work together throughout the academic semester. Students were told, "The person you select as a resource mentor must be a practicing school administrator. Ideally, he or she is someone with whom you already have an established relationship and someone whom you see on a regular basis" (http://www.unocoe.unomaha.edu/mckay/foliodirection.htm January 15, 2001). Resource mentors were asked to recommend professional growth activities for students,

such as alerting the graduate student to volunteer opportunities, committee positions, supervision opportunities, professional conferences, or other activities (http://www.unocoe.unomaha.edu/mckay/foliodirection.htm January 15, 2001). One of the most important activities of the program is that the mentor is requested to help the graduate student select one real-life project as a part of the course(s) taken in the semester, and review the outcome of the project(s) with the student at the end of the term (http://www.unocoe.unomaha.edu/mckay/foliodirection.htm January 15, 2001).

Instructors for coursework in educational administration designed at least one course assignment in which the graduate student was required to work with the resource mentor in completing the assignment. For example, in the research-related course, the student was required to develop a research prospectus which related to research interests for his or her individual school; the resource mentor was asked to advise the student and to approve the final project proposal. In the school law course, the student was required to compile research on five current school law cases from the nation, to confer with the resource mentor, and to reflect in writing about the cases and the mentor's perspective on the cases.

In some courses, the resource mentor was involved in developing an activity which required more intensive work on the part of the graduate student. In a course related to school community relations, the administrative student was asked to develop or improve a web site that included an interactive feature where parents could respond. Resource mentors were also asked to confer with the graduate student at opportune intervals throughout the semester, and to involve the student in administrative experiences at appropriate times.

In April, 2000, resource mentors and their graduate students were invited to a university-sponsored reception at which the mentors were again told that their involvement was very important to the development of new school leaders, and the students and mentors were given an opportunity to share some of the successes of the academic year.

In the second year of the program, new graduate students were required to name a resource mentor; continuing students were given the opportunity to continue working with the same mentor or to change mentors. A reception for the students and their mentors is planned for April, 2001. The program for the reception will involve a panel of mentors and

students sharing some successes of the academic year. It is hoped that the modeling of success stories will increase the success of programs for more students. In addition, instructors have continued to revise the experiences or activities which involve resource mentors.

Assessment of data from surveys of resource mentors and students occurred at the end of the first year, and will continue in the future (Dappen, 2001; Rippe, 2001). Revisions to the program will be based on assessment data. Information on the first-year results is shared in other parts of this symposium presentation.

As part of the continuing development of the program, university representatives have incorporated the use of a performance portfolio which requires students to evaluate their administrative skills at the beginning, middle, and end of their preparation program and to collect evidence of their administrative training experiences. The requirement of reflection on the part of potential administrators provides additional benefit to the program.

The combination of the resource mentor program and the performance portfolio project incorporates many of the best practices as described in the literature. Students are given multiple opportunities for mini-internships throughout the duration of their preparation program (Krueger & Milstein, 1995; Milstein, 1993; ; Milstein & Krueger, 1997; Shen & Hsieh, 1999). The alignment of resource mentor activities to established performance criteria further strengthens the program (Calabrese and Straut, 1999; Chance, 2000; Schon, 1987). Initial attempts to provide training to mentors are in line with recommendations of previous research (Calabrese & Straut, 1999). The requirements to reflect about experiences adds to the learning (Chance, 2000).

Mentoring aspects of the program provide opportunities for development of interns' abilities and confidence (Barnett, 1990a; Playko, 1995; Shelton, 1991). The use of a contract-like agreement formalizes the agreement (Monsour, 1998). The combination of the mentoring project with the prescribed performance portfolio aligned with NCATE/ELCC standards strengthens the beneficial prospects of the program (Daloz, 1986).

References

Barnett, B. G. (1990a, April). Mentoring programs for administrator preparation: Mentors and interns' perceptions of program success. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.

Barnett, B. G. (1990b, May). The mentor-intern relationship: Making the most of learning from experience. NASSP Bulletin, 17 - 24.

Calabrese, R. L. & Straut, D. (1999). Reconstructing the Internship, Journal of School Leadership, 9, 400 - 421.

Chance, P. L. (2000, October). The role of mentoring in preparing future principals. Paper presented at the annual Women in Educational Leadership Conference, Lincoln, NE.

Cordeiro P. A., Krueger J. A., Parks D., Restine N., & Wilton P. T. (1993). Taking stock: Learnings gleaned from universities participating in the Danforth program. In M. M. Milstein and associates (Eds.), Changing the way we prepare educational leaders (pp. 17 - 38). Newbury Park, CA: Corwin.

Daloz, L. A. (1986). Effective teaching and mentoring: Realizing the transformational power of adult learning experiences. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dappen, L. (2001, March). The benefits of a resource mentor program on prospective and practicing school administrators. Paper presented at the annual American Association for Teacher Education Conference, Dallas, Texas.

Hackman, D. G., Russell, F. S., and Elliott, R. J. (1999). Making administrative internships meaningful. Planning and Changing, 30 (1), 2-14.

Knowles. M. S. (1987) Adult Learning. In R. L. Craig (Ed.), Training and Development Handbook (3rd ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill.

Kolb D. (1984). Experiential Learning. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Kraus, C. M. & Coreriro, P. A. (1995). Challenging Tradition: Re-examining the preparation of educational leaders for the workplace. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Salt Lake City.

Krueger, J.A. & Milstein, M.M. (1995). Promoting excellence in educational leadership: What really matters? Planning and Changing, 26, 148-167.

Lave, J., & Wegner, F. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leithwood, K. Jantzi, D., & Coffin, G. (1995). Preparing school leaders: What works? Connections, 3 (3), 1-7.

Leithwood, K., Steinback, R., & Begley, P. (1992). Socialization experiences: Becoming a principal in Canada. In F. W. Parkay & G. E. Hall (Eds.) Becoming a principal: The challenges of beginning leadership (pp. 284-307). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Milstein, M.M., & Associates. (1993). Changing the way we prepare educational leaders: The Danforth experience. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin.

Milstein, M.M. & Krueger, J.A. (1997). Improving educational administration preparation programs: What we've learned over the past decade. Peabody Journal of Education, 72 (2), 100-116.

Monsour, F. (January, 1998). Twenty recommendations for an administrative mentoring program. NASSP Bulletin, 97-100.

Murphy, J. & Hallinger, P. (1987). Approaches to administrative training in education. Albany: State University of New York press.

Muse, I. D., Thomas, G. J., & Wadsen, F. D. (1992). Potential problems (and solutions) of mentoring in the preparation of school administrators. Journal of School Leadership, 2, 310-319.

Muse, I., Wadsen, F. & Thomas, G. (1988). The mentor principal handbook, Bringham Young University: Leaders Preparation Program.

National Policy Board for Educational Administration (1989). Improving the preparation of School Administrators: An Agenda for Reform. Charlottesville, VA: Author.

Playko, M. A. (1995). Mentoring for educational leaders: A practitioner's perspective. Journal of Educational Administration, 33 (5), 84-92.

Rippe, K. (2001, March). Anecdotal responses collected through interviews with selected mentees in the Educational Administration Program. Paper presented at the annual American Association for Teacher Education Conference, Dallas, Texas.

Schon, D. A. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Shelton, M.M. (1991). Mentoring: Lending a hand to tomorrow's principals. Principal, 70, 16.

Shen, J. & Hsieh, C.L. (1999). The instructional goals of the school leadership program: Future school leaders' and educational leadership professors' perspectives. Journal of School Leadership, 9, 79 - 91.

Thomson, S. D., Hill, T. S., & Conny, B. M. (Eds.). (1993). Principals for our changing schools: The knowledge and skill base. Fairfax, VA: National Policy Board for Educational Administration.

University Council for Educational Administration. (1987). Leaders for America's schools: The report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration. Tempe, AZ: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 286 265).

Walker, A. & Stott, K. (January, 1994). Mentoring programs for aspiring principals: Getting a solid start. NASSP Bulletin, 72-77.